GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PANCHAYATI RAJ
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4817
ANSWERED ON:09.05.2007
IMPROVING LOCAL GOVERNANCE
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Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has formulated any plan to improve the local governance through re-engineering of Government processes, modernization and effective use of technologies like IT;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the efforts made by the Government for better local governance during the last three years?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR)

(a) & (b): fa the resolutions passed in the Seventh Round Table of Ministers in charge of Panchayati Raj held in Jaipur in December, 2004, it was recognized that IT (Information Technology and Communication) is a vital input for capacity and capability building of Panchayati Raj Institutions. It was also envisaged that IT ought to be primarily positioned

a decision-making support system for the Panchayats themselves;
a tool for transparency, disclosure of information to citizens, social audit;
a means for better and convergent delivery of services to citizens;
a means for improving internal management and efficiency of Panchayats;
a means for Capacity-Building of representatives and officials of the Panchayats;
an e-Procurement medium.

To implement the resolutions of the Seventh Round Table, Government have formulated a Mission Mode Project on e-PRIs under the National e-Governance plan for IT-enabled e-Governance at the Gram Panchayat level.

(c) The first task before the Ministry was to evolve a national consensus in respect of the Roadmap for Panchayati Raj through mutual consultation between the Centre and the States. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj convened Seven Round Tables of State Panchayati Raj Ministers with the Union Minister of Panchayati Raj between July and December 2004. The deliberations centered on the 18 identified dimensions of Panchayati Raj ranging from the effective Devolution of the Functions, Finances and Functionaries to District Planning, Training and Capacity Building and IT-enabled e-governance. At the conclusion of each Round Table, nearly 150 action points, comprised in the Compendium, were unanimously adopted by all Panchayati Raj Ministers. This has become a National Roadmap for effective Panchayati Raj. The National Road Map is being reinforced by State-specific Roadmaps based on Joint Statements of Conclusions or Memoranda of Understanding entered into between Chief Ministers of States and authorities concerned in Union Territories at the conclusion of Panchayati Raj tours by the Union Minister of Panchayati Raj to States/UTs. So far, 21 such jointly signed statements have been issued. The texts of joint statements concluded before November, 2006 are included in the Report on `The State of the Panchayats: A Mid-Term Review and Appraisal` tabled in both Houses of Parliament on 23 November, 2006.

A Committee of Panchayati Raj Secretaries headed by the Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj has been constituted to monitor the progress and implementation of these 150 Action Points. This Committee also services the Council of Panchayati Raj Ministers. The Committee of Secretaries has held eight meetings. The Council of Ministers has been convened twice, at Kochi, Kerala in August 2005 and at Bhubaneshwar, Orissa in June 2006, respectively. The third meeting of the Council is being scheduled shortly.

The Empowered Sub-Committee of the National Development Council is now Chaired by the Union Minister of Panchayati Raj. Its recommendations are binding on State Governments. The Sub-Committee has dealt with various aspects of devolution and closely monitors developments in this regard.